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ABSTRACT

This document answers such questions as: What is the corporate action agenda of the National Alliance of Business (NAB)? Why is corporate action to improve education so critical? How is NAB addressing the issues? What has been achieved? What are NAB's long-term goals in the educational arena? and What are the components of NAB's corporate action agenda? The document concludes with lists of the NAB board of directors and the location of NAB regional service offices. (CML)

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CORPORATE action PACKAGE

# CORPORATE ACTION AGENDA

## The Business of Improving Public Education

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NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF BUSINESS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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# THE ALLIANCE'S CORPORATE ACTION AGENDA

With its new Corporate Action Agenda, the National Alliance of Business supports corporate initiatives directed to purposeful, results-oriented actions to improve American public education. The Corporate Action Agenda provides the tools and assistance to stimulate and sustain the active participation of American business leaders in improving public education to make it responsive to the changing requirements of the modern workplace.

Components of the Alliance's Corporate Action Agenda include a series of "how to" publications and videos and a range of activities to disseminate "cutting-edge" ideas and practices throughout the country.

Publications in the Corporate Action Agenda move business people from broad awareness of the education crisis to an understanding of education reform issues and the steps needed to help corporate leaders take decisive and direct actions to improve education. These publications include:

***Corporate Action Agenda: The Business of Improving Education (Executive Summary)***

***Building A Quality Workforce Video***

***America's Leaders Speak Out On Business-Education Partnerships***

***A Blueprint for Business On Restructuring Education***

***Business Strategies That Work: Corporate Collaborations To Improve Education***

***Who Will Do The Work? A Business Guide for Preparing Tomorrow's Workforce***

***The Compact Project: School Business Partnerships for Improving Education***

In addition to these written products, the Corporate Action Agenda features other tools and activities that foster collaboration, networking and information dissemination designed to make business leaders effective advocates and action agents for education improvement and reform. These resources include:

The Alliance's Partnership Network

Alliance Executive Speakers Bureau

Articles and Supplements in Leading Business Publications

Education Institutes, Regional Symposia, and Seminars

Harvard Business School Business/Education Initiative

To join the National Alliance of Business and participate in the Alliance's Corporate Action Agenda for education improvement, please write to the National Alliance of Business, 1201 New York Avenue N.W., Washington, DC 20005, or call (202) 289-2888.

# A Message From The Alliance Chairman

*"Many business leaders talk about improving education, but few actually step up to the challenge with an effective action agenda. There is clearly a disparity between our understanding of the problems and issues involved, and our ability to intervene constructively and effectively.*

*In response to this need, the Alliance has developed a Corporate Action Agenda, a comprehensive array of publications, videos and activities to support business initiatives directed to purposeful, results-oriented action to improve American public education. The Corporate Action Agenda provides tools and assistance to stimulate and sustain American business efforts to improve public education, to make it more responsive to the changing requirements of our modern workplaces.*

*Working with educators, elected officials, community leaders, parents and children, we as employers can be effective advocates for education improvement and reform. The Alliance's Corporate Action Agenda is designed to rekindle our corporate will, to mobilize our talents and to support our work toward measurable bottom line results with regard to American public education."*

*John Carter*
*Chairman, National Alliance of Business*
*President & CEO, The Equitable Financial Companies*

# What Is The Alliance's Corporate Action Agenda?

***"I believe our Nation's schools should be second to none, and helping them reach that level ranks among my Administration's highest priorities... Because the NAB is particularly well positioned to generate business involvement in this enterprise, I am asking you to make a special effort to recruit this country's employers to work for the improvement of our schools."***

*George Bush*
*President of the United States*

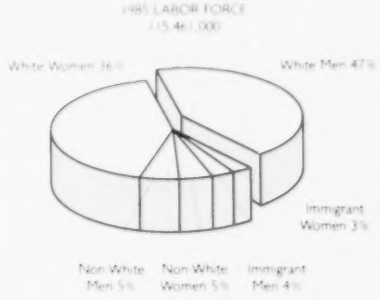
The Alliance's Corporate Action Agenda is a comprehensive array of activities to increase the effectiveness of corporate leaders as advocates and assets for education improvement. The Corporate Action Agenda was developed to address the disturbing disparity between business' understanding of the crisis in American public education today and our ability to take action that will effectively and measurably improve the quality of education.

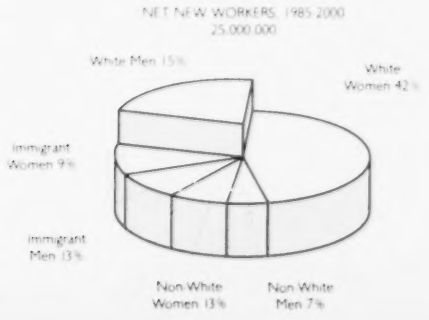
The Corporate Action Agenda is designed to move business leaders from rhetoric to results. It propels business leaders from an awareness of the problems and issues in public education to an understanding of realistic options and expectations in terms of accountability and results. The Action Agenda reduces the corporate "learning curve" by developing the knowledge and skill base of business people participating in partnerships to improve schools. The Action Agenda is designed to help business leaders assess and build on their strengths, identify and overcome the barriers to effective partnerships, and collectively take advantage of the opportunities for systemic education reform.

Through the Alliance's Corporate Action Agenda, business leaders who are already effectively engaged in education improvement are helping to strengthen and expand the cadre of other businesses helping our nation's young people get the education they need to assure quality in our American workforce.

**The Changing Labor Force 1985-2000**

Of the new workers entering the labor force by the year 2000, only 15 percent will be white men, and the rest either white women, members of minority groups, or immigrants.



# Why Is Corporate Action To Improve Education So Critical?

☐ **An Economic Imperative.** Education is big business. We spend $185 billion per year, 4.1 percent of our GNP, on public education, grades K-12. In many communities, education has a bigger budget and more employees than the largest business. It is imperative that these massive investments of public dollars be spent effectively.

While the cost of education is high, the cost of preventable problems and educational failure is even higher. As reported by the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, each year's class of dropouts costs the nation about $260 billion in lost earnings and foregone taxes. Unemployment rates for high school dropouts are more than twice those of high school graduates. Each added year of education reduces the probability of welfare dependency in adulthood by 35 percent. Quality education similarly reduces other social costs—crime, drug abuse, teen pregnancy, and the related losses in productivity.

☐ **A Demographic Imperative.** Our labor force is changing, and American business is losing ground competitively. As our society ages and the birth rate drops, the number of young people available for work is rapidly declining. Of the new workers entering the labor force by the year 2000, only 15 percent will be white men, and the rest either women, members of minority groups, or immigrants—groups who traditionally have been the least well-prepared to enter and succeed in the workplace.

While today's jobs are increasingly demanding, today's labor force is increasingly comprised of people lacking essential skills. On any international measure of academic excellence, even our top American students cannot compete with average students from other developed countries.

Now, when our educational needs are greater than ever before, the political constituency supporting public education is declining. Today, only one in ten urban households has youngsters in public school. This decline in constituency is occurring at a time when our public schools are being asked to do more than we can expect them to do by themselves. From drugs to dropouts, from health care to day care, schools are frequently asked to deal with our society's and our families' changing needs. This means that our communities and our businesses must assume a greater role in supporting public schools.

***"Our students are performing minimally, lacking the advanced skills needed to succeed. We must do better or perish as the nation we know today."***

*Honorable Lauro Cavazos*
*Secretary*
*U.S. Department of Education*

***"It is cheaper to send someone to Penn State than to the State Penn."***

*Harold Hodgkinson*
*Senior Fellow & Director*
*Center for Demographic Policy*
*Institute for Educational Leadership*

# How Are We Addressing The Issues?

*"If a health epidemic were striking one-fourth of the children in this country, . . . a national emergency would be declared. But when hundreds of thousands of students leave school every year shockingly unprepared, the nation remains far too lethargic. We need a larger vision, an urgent call to action. Let's commit ourselves to rebuild the nation's schools just as the Marshall Plan helped rebuild a devastated world."*

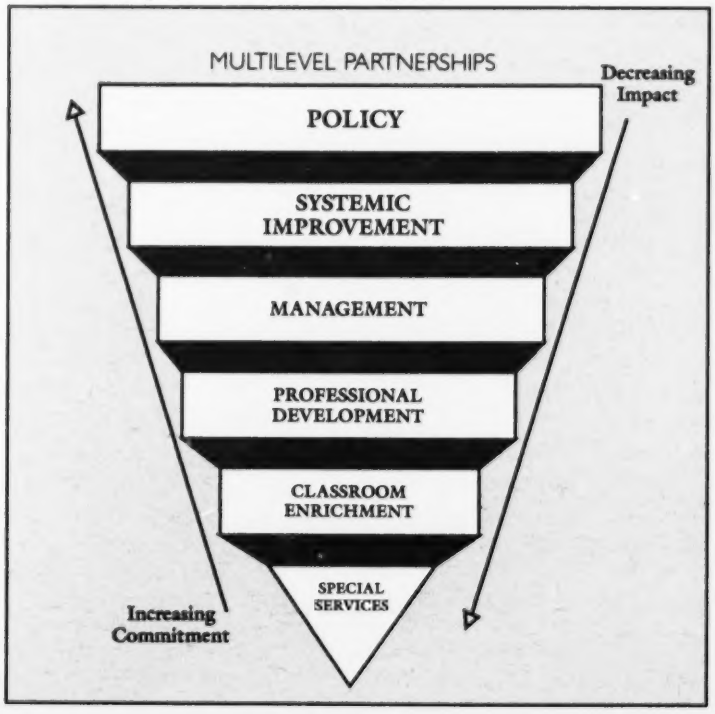
*Ernest L. Boyer*
*President*
*Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching*

Alliance companies are working on a variety of fronts to intensify and fortify partnerships that operate at the highest levels, including policy, advocacy, and system-wide institutional change. We believe that the broader the base of business involvement and the more comprehensive, quantifiable and public the goals, the better the chance to attain and sustain significant improvements.

The Alliance is helping business more effectively:

- Articulate its strategic and immediate workforce needs and workplace requirements;
- Understand the needs and current status of the local school system;
- Comprehend the governance, financing and operations of the education system;
- Understand the leverage points, roles, responsibilities and relationships among the various parties in the education system; and
- Direct corporate resources and expertise to improve schools.

**Levels of Impact on Educational System**



# What Has Been Achieved?

**While more businesses are becoming involved in education improvement efforts, there are still too few quality partnerships that result in education reform.**

On the positive side, business has generated:

- **A Growing Number Of Partnerships**. Between 1983-84 and 1987-88, the number of education partnerships nationwide in public elementary and secondary schools rose from 42,200 to 140,800. Fifty-seven percent of these were sponsored by businesses or business organizations. During 1987-88, 39 percent of the nation's 83,000 public schools had large business sponsors, and 34 percent had small business sponsors.
- **More Sophisticated Partnerships**. As businesses gain experience, in working with education, the depth and breadth of their involvement is expanding, from partnerships that "feel good" to partnerships that do good. From establishing state-wide or community-wide compacts or alliances, to creating public education funds, to launching special purpose educational organizations to attract other business investors and volunteers, businesses are coming to understand the obligations, options, and benefits of partnerships that produce results.
- **Sustained Corporate Interest in Public Education**. Almost without exception, leading business organizations have placed education high on their priority lists of activities and have helped sustain and broaden public interest in this issue over a relatively long term. National business organizations such as The Business Roundtable, Committee for Economic Development, Conference Board, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Alliance of Business, and numerous regional and state organizations such as the California Roundtable, the South Carolina Joint Business-Education Committee, and others have come forward with policy statements, national forums, and legislative proposals on education reform. Business-led campaigns for tax increases and bond issues have been launched in New Orleans, Cincinnati, Miami, South Carolina, and California. Corporations are becoming the new political constituency for public education in America.
- **Increased Knowledge About What Works Best For Whom And Under What Circumstances**. We have learned a great deal about the partnership process—the leadership, vision, structure, planning, stewardship, and evaluation required. We have learned about policy and program approaches with proven success in working with various target groups including dropouts and other youth at risk. We have learned that it is possible to apply fundamental business principles such as strategic planning,

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*"(Improving our schools) is a challenge that will not be solved quickly or easily, but...we are going to continue to work on measurable improvements in K-12 education."*

*John F. Akers*
*Chairman*
*IBM Corporation*

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*"We're in a war, but it's a winnable war, because of the innate talents and capabilities of our youth. If we set the right example, if we provide discipline and support, if we challenge them, our young people, from even the most impoverished backgrounds, can compete with anyone in the world."*

*John Pepper*
*President*
*The Procter & Gamble Company*

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*"We must look to our line workers, those closest to the action—teachers—to generate improvements in education."*

*John J. Creedon*
*President and Chief Executive Officer*
*Metropolitan Life*

competition, decentralization, professional development and training, mentoring, team problem-solving, and accountability to help schools reform and restructure.

**However, even with these positive efforts, the quality of American education is still a substantial problem, particularly in our larger, urban communities:**

**Too Few Partnerships Designed To Tackle The Toughest Issues**. Too few partnerships are aimed at the high impact areas of policy, systemic change, and management improvement. Too many partnerships still operate at the margins, avoid the toughest problems, and fail to target resources toward schools with greatest needs.

**Imperfect Flow Of Information**. Costly failures are frequently repeated. Solutions to complex problems are constantly being reinvented. The potential for large scale improvement is enormous. But the size of the education enterprise and the imperfect flow of information impedes our widespread application of successful solutions.

**Piecemeal Successes With No Coherent National Approach**. There is no educational problem that is not being successfully addressed somewhere. But these piecemeal successes do not add up to a measurable national improvement in education. In fact, we lack a coherent approach to define, monitor, measure, and publicize the quality of education nationally.

# What Are The Alliance's Long Term Goals In The Education Arena?

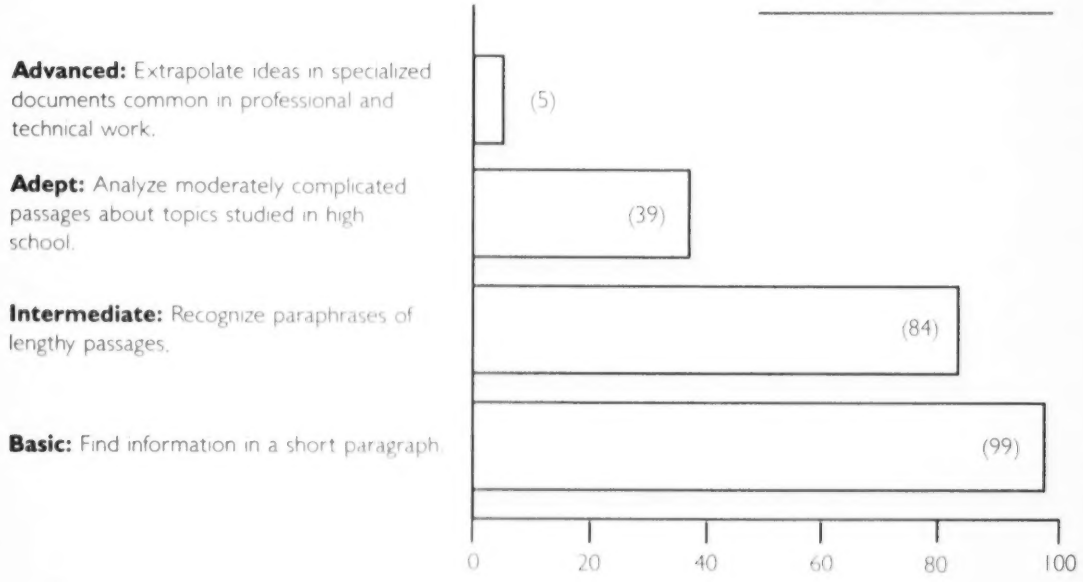
☐ ***The Alliance's Corporate Action Agenda is a multi-tiered strategy which provides tools and resources to motivate, mobilize, and bolster business support to education. Through the Action Agenda, business will be positioned to:***

- Improve the quality of business-education partnerships nationwide, and stimulate the creation of effective efforts to improve the schools.
- Serve as effective advocates for education reform and improvement.
- Disseminate information and apply knowledge about what works.
- Serve as leaders in developing a national strategy for school improvement.

***"We know that education is an indispensable investment in our future. We must raise our nation's educational achievements to bring about changes that will restore market competition and ensure future economic survival."***

*John Singleton*
*Vice Chairman*
*Security Pacific Corporation*

**Percentage of In-School 17-Year-Olds at or Above Various Reading Proficiency Levels**




Source: National Assessment of Educational Progress. *The Reading Report Card* (Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service, 1986), 16-17, 27.

# What Are The Components Of The Alliance's Corporate Action Agenda?

*"What has been accomplished to date through educational partnerships clearly demonstrates that business can help improve our schools. In the end, education is our nation's most important business."*

*John L. Clendenin*
*Chairman and Chief Executive Officer*
*BellSouth Corporation*

☐ The Alliance's Corporate Action Agenda includes a series of "how to" publications and videos, and a range of activities to disseminate "cutting-edge" ideas and practices throughout the country.

Publications in the Corporate Action Agenda move business leaders from broad awareness of the education crisis to an understanding of education reform issues and a knowledge of the steps needed to take decisive and direct actions to improve education. These products include:

***Corporate Action Agenda: The Business Of Improving Public Education (Executive Summary)***

This Publication.

***Building A Quality Workforce Video***

This timely video presents hard data on the current crisis in American education, provides corporate human resource and personnel managers' perspectives on the preparedness of today's young people to face the challenges of modern workplaces, and features business, labor, education, and government leaders' views on the challenges in classrooms and workplaces across America today.

This video features prominent national business, labor, government and education leaders who are addressing the critical challenges of building a quality workforce. Among the leaders featured in this 10-minute video are Elizabeth Dole, Secretary of Labor; John Carter, Chairman, The Equitable Financial Companies and Chairman, National Alliance of Business; and John Ong, Chairman & CEO, The BFGoodrich Company.

***America's Leaders Speak Out On Business-Education Partnerships***

In April 1989, the National Alliance of Business, in cooperation with the Institute for Educational Leadership, held a national forum for educators and business people involved and interested in the complex mission of school reform. They heard from business and education leaders involved in the growing field of business-education collaboratives.

This report summarizes the ideas expressed at the Compact Institute/Business Leadership Forum as those managing partnerships and those concerned with judging their progress reported on both the successes and the pitfalls involved in these far-reaching, locally designed and implemented school-reform initiatives. The report gleans the best lessons from the experiences of communities involved in compact projects and provides a framework for action assessment.

NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF BUSINESS
1201 New York Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20005

# Order Form

Please use this form to order additional materials from the Corporate Action Agenda.

| Title and Description | Catalog # | Quantity | Price | Total Price |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Corporate Action Agenda: The Business of Improving Public Education (Executive Summary) | R3862 | | Free | |
| Building A Quality Workforce Video | R3893 | | $35.00 | |
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| Business Strategies That Work: Corporate Collaborations To Improve Education | R3894 | | $15.00 | |
| Who Will Do The Work? A Business Guide for Preparing Tomorrow's Workforce | R3828 | | $14.00 | |
| The Compact Project: School Business Partnerships for Improving Education | R3829 | | $18.00 | |

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***A Blueprint For Business On Restructuring Education***

This report helps business people understand what is involved and how they can assist in restructuring education. It explains the components of restructuring; describes the skills, experiences and expertise that business has to offer to the education system; describes the barriers or gaps that need to be overcome in order to build a climate of understanding and mutual trust, a "comfort zone;" sets forth the process for developing a plan of action, and formalizing the business commitment.

The report provides vignettes that illustrate what works, what doesn't and why, and identifies common denominators for successful business-education collaborations.

***Business Strategies That Work: Corporate Collaborations To Improve Education***

This business publication spotlights examples of corporate collaborations which are succeeding in improving education. Through in-depth case studies and several dozen mini-examples, collaborative corporate work in education is documented and analyzed from a management perspective—strategic planning, management systems, human resource development, and quality control. Corporate efforts are also examined in accordance with their comparative advantage by various industries—finance/insurance, manufacturing, services, technology and retailing.

Case studies include partnerships led by large and small corporations which are achieving exemplary results. A planning guide and accompanying charts assist corporations seeking to take actions in accordance with their comparative advantage and unique expertise. This is an essential primer for corporate personnel on the differences between managing in the public and private sectors, with practical advice by CEOs and other business leaders on what works and what does not.

***Who Will Do The Work? A Business Guide for Preparing Tomorrow's Workforce***

Corporate America is looking for ways to let schools know what skills businesses look for in new workers and ways to ensure that schools are capable of producing individuals with the right skills. This publication provides business with a detailed guide for becoming involved in one important option for business-education partnerships—school-to-work transition programs—through which students are introduced to all aspects of work, including preparation, placement and performance.

This booklet describes the important role that business plays in enhancing a young person's education by providing and supporting a job. It outlines the effective elements of a model school-to-work transition program, and details the steps needed to

*"The politics and bureaucracy of public education are a real culture shock for business."*

*Vaughn Beals*
*Chairman*
*Harley Davidson*

develop and sustain the process. Profiles of successful programs in Boston, Louisville and Portland are highlighted. Key planning issues in designing this partnership are identified. Finally, individual and shared roles and responsibilities of business, education, and the indepen dent broker or intermediary are described and delineated in a graphic model. These school-based work preparation programs can serve as a first step to understanding schools and as a basis for more systemic change.

***The Compact Project: School Business Partnerships for Improving Education***

This publication documents the lessons learned in a three-year education improvement demonstration project operated by the National Alliance of Business in twelve cities nationwide. Profiles of the development of the business-education-government partnerships feature outcomes and summaries of lessons learned in each site. Recommendations are provided for leaders and policymakers undertaking similar community-wide partnerships.

☐ **In addition to these written products, the Corporate Action Agenda features other tools and activities that foster collaboration and information exchange designed to help business leaders become effective advocates for education improvement and reform.** These resources include:

**The Alliance's Partnership Network**

Building on the partnership network created under NAB's business-education demonstration project, the Alliance is expanding and supporting a larger Partnership Network of cities and states actively engaged in education reform and restructuring. The network's purpose is to shortcut the process of translating lessons learned into specific actions, by encouraging experienced state and local partners to share their expertise on what works and their knowledge of new developments in the field of education improvement.

Members of the network will receive a periodic newsletter with updates and profiles of key activities, invitations to information exchange meetings and regional seminars, early information on new partnership publications, and available technical assistance. As has been the case with NAB's twelve Compact communities, members of the Alliance's Partnership Network are likely to receive increased attention and resources from both public and private funding sources.

**Alliance Executive Speakers Bureau**

Executives of the Alliance will provide conference keynote messages and presentations to large and small audiences of business and education leaders, public policymakers, and program operators. The central message is to develop business leadership in

education improvement, reform and restructuring, as a key to our nation's economic success, productivity and competitiveness. The quality education/quality workforce message is reinforced with practical information on what business can do to improve education, how they can do it, with whom, at what costs, and for what results.

Drawing on lessons from experience in national policy formulation and local business-education partnerships, NAB's Executive speakers synthesize lessons learned and recruit business to join the Alliance's efforts to improve America's public schools in order to build a quality workforce.

**Articles and Supplements in Leading Business Publications**

In order to expand public recognition of the importance of business leadership in education reform, NAB continues to produce a series of articles and supplements for such leading publications as *Time*, *BusinessWeek*, and the *New York Times Magazine*.

**Education Institutes, Regional Symposia, and Seminars**

Beginning in the Spring of 1989, NAB expanded its Education Institute into a national forum for sharing the latest information and results in education reform and restructuring.

Modeled after the Alliance's highly acclaimed annual job training conference, the Institute features business, education, and government leaders from across the country who are involved in education reform. The format includes plenary sessions, workshops featuring practitioners and other experts, and meal and social events designed to encourage informal information-sharing networks.

NAB also conducts a series of regional seminars for partnership skill-building and problem solving. These one-day symposia provide the "how-to's" of educational restructuring.

**Harvard Business School Business/Education Initiative**

Through a joint initiative of the students at the Harvard Business School and the National Alliance of Business, and funded by the Perot Foundation, an initiative was begun in the Summer of 1989 in which 20 Harvard Business School students were employed in a variety of corporate and education positions in four communities, all examining corporate involvement in public education. In Boston, New York, Washington and Atlanta, these students gained valuable public/private work experiences, and served as hands-on facilitators and objective outside observers of ongoing community partnership efforts.

Based on their experiences and observations, they prepared recommendations on the corporate role in education improvement. This project provides an opportunity to follow up on the results in these communities one year later and the impacts on the career choices of these 20 students.

***". . . there is no such thing as a social organization that will change itself without outside pressure. Schools need a tough-minded friend that will hold them to high standards of performance."***

*Denis Doyle*
*Co-Author, Winning the Brain Race: A Bold Plan to Make our Schools Competitive*
*Senior Research Fellow*
*The Hudson Institute*

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The Equitable Financial Companies

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**Joshua I. Smith**
Maxima Corporation

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# National Alliance of Business Regional Service Offices

☐ For additional materials and assistance, contact the NAB Regional Service Office in your area:

## Headquarters

National Alliance of Business
1201 New York Avenue, N.W.
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Washington, DC 20005
202/289-2888

## Regional Service Offices

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Los Angeles, CA 90017
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John House
Area Vice President
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Seattle, WA 98101
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# NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF BUSINESS

The Alliance is a business-led organization which builds business partnerships with government, labor and education to assure quality in the American workforce. Membership affords an opportunity to join with like-minded corporations and individuals working to improve quality in education and the American workforce. As a member, you have access to some 40 NAB staff specialists on education, training and workforce issues.

Call (202) 289-2848, or write:
Philip H. Yasinski
Senior Vice President
National Alliance of Business
1201 New York Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005

*"As skilled employees become more difficult to find, we, as business leaders, need to become increasingly involved in shaping our future workforce. . . the NAB has been a leader in increasing awareness of these problems and in offering sensible, cost effective solutions for building a quality workforce."*

EDMUND T. PRATT, JR.
Chairman, Pfizer, Inc.
Chairman, The Business Roundtable

*"The Alliance is doing more than any other organization in America to forge meaningful partnerships between the business and education communities. Partnerships that, to my mind, are absolutely essential. . . if America is to retain her economic strength and international competitiveness."*

JOHN ONG
Chairman and CEO,
The BFGoodrich Company

## JOIN THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF BUSINESS

### The Team For Improving Workforce Quality

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The National Alliance of Business builds business partnerships with government, labor, and education to assure quality in the American workforce. The Alliance shapes social policies to improve education and strengthen job training to develop versatility and instill the values essential to success in the modern workplace.

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